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Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Report of the Third Committee

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I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Third Committee considered the item at its 27th, 31st and 36th meetings, on 28 October and 2 and 5 November 1998. An account of the Committee's discussion of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/53/SR.27, 31 and 36).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations (A/53/282);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (A/53/310).

4. At the 27th meeting, on 28 October, the Director of the New York Liaison Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, made an introductory statement (A/C.3/53/SR.27).

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II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.19

5. At the 31st meeting, on 2 November, the representative of Denmark, on behalf of *Argentina, Australia, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Mexico,* the *Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Solomon Islands, Spain* and *Sweden*, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International Decade of the World's Indigenous People" (A/C.3/53/L.19). Subsequently, *Armenia, Botswana, Colombia, Croatia, Guyana, Panama, Peru,* the *Philippines* and *Turkmenistan* joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.19, without a vote (see para. 10, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.20

7. At the 31st meeting, on 2 November, the representative of *Denmark*, on behalf of *Australia, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland,* the *Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Solomon Islands, Spain* and *Sweden*, subsequently joined by *Colombia, Panama* and *Peru*, introduced a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations" (A/C.3/53/L.20).

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.20, without a vote (see para. 10, draft resolution II).

C. Draft decision

9. At its 36th meeting, on 5 November, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations (A/53/282) (see para. 11).

III. Recommendations of the Third Committee

10. The third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I

International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/108 of 12 December 1997 and previous resolutions on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People,

Recalling also that the goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health, and that the theme of the Decade is "Indigenous people: partnership in action",

Recognizing the importance of consultation and cooperation with indigenous people in planning and implementing the programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People,[1] the need for adequate financial support from the international community, including support from within the United Nations system, and the need for adequate coordination and communication channels,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;[2]

2. *Affirms its conviction* of the value and diversity of the cultures and forms of social organization of indigenous people and its conviction that the development of indigenous people within their countries will contribute to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of all the countries of the world;

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of strengthening the human and institutional capacity of indigenous people to develop their own solutions to their problems, recommends for these purposes that the United Nations University, as a follow-up to the planned workshop for research and higher education institutions, as outlined in Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1997/32 of 11 April 1997[3] and 1998/13 of 9 April 1998,[4] consider the possibility of sponsoring, in each region, one or more existing institutions of higher education as centres of excellence and the diffusion of expertise, *inter alia*, by conducting relevant studies, and invites the Commission to recommend appropriate means of implementation;

4. *Notes* that the programme of activities of the Decade may be reviewed and updated throughout the Decade and that, at the mid-point of the Decade in 1999, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should review the results of the activities in order to identify obstacles to the achievement of the goals of the Decade and to recommend solutions for overcoming such obstacles;

5. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as coordinator for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People:

(a) To continue to promote the objectives of the Decade, taking into account, in the fulfilment of her functions, the special concerns of indigenous people;

(b) To proceed with the organization, from within existing resources and voluntary contributions, of the workshop for research and higher education institutions focusing on indigenous issues in education, in consultation with indigenous people and the relevant United Nations bodies, and which the Government of Costa Rica has offered to host in 1999;

(c) To give due regard to the dissemination, from within existing resources and voluntary contributions, of information on the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people and, in that context, to consider the possibility of organizing projects, special events, exhibitions and other activities targeting the public, in particular young people;

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[1] Resolution 50/157, annex.

[2] A/53/310.

[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 3* (E/1997/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[4] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

(d) To submit, through the Secretary-General, an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the programme of activities of the Decade;

6. *Reaffirms* the adoption of a declaration on the rights of indigenous people as a major objective of the Decade, and underlines the importance of effective participation by indigenous representatives in the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights established pursuant to Commission resolution 1995/32 of 3 March 1995;[5]

7. *Also reaffirms*, among the objectives of the Decade listed in the programme of activities, the consideration of the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system;

8. *Urges* Governments to participate actively in the open-ended inter-sessional ad hoc working group that the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1998/20 of 9 April 1998[6] decided to establish from within existing overall United Nations resources, and which is to meet for five working days prior to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission to elaborate and consider further proposals for the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system;

9. *Encourages* Governments to support the Decade by:

(a) Preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people;

(b) Seeking means, in consultation with indigenous people, of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters that affect them;

(c) Establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with indigenous people;

(d) Contributing to the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;

(e) Contributing, together with other donors, to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations in order to assist indigenous representatives in participating in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights charged with elaborating a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people and the open-ended inter-sessional ad hoc working group charged with elaborating and considering further proposals for the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system;

(f) Considering contributing, as appropriate, to the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, in support of the goals of the Decade;

(g) Identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

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[5] Ibid., *1995, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

[6] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

10. *Invites* United Nations financial and developmental institutions, operational programmes and the specialized agencies, in accordance with the existing procedures of their governing bodies:

(a) To give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of those people in developing countries, including through the preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence;

(b) To launch special projects, through appropriate channels and in cooperation with indigenous people, to strengthen their community-level initiatives and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among indigenous people and other relevant experts;

(c) To designate focal points for coordination of activities related to the Decade with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

and commends those institutions, programmes and agencies that have already done so;

11. *Recommends* that the Secretary-General ensure coordinated follow-up to the recommendations concerning indigenous people of relevant world conferences, namely, the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, and the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995;

12. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit, through the Secretary-General, a report on the implementation of the programme of activities of the Decade to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session;

13. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

Draft resolution II

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 40/131 of 13 December 1985, establishing the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, and 50/156 of 21 December 1995, in which it decided that the Fund should also be used to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights established pursuant to Commission resolution 1995/32 of 3 March 1995[7] with the sole purpose of elaborating a draft declaration, considering the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples annexed to resolution 1994/45 of 26 August 1994 of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,[8]

[7] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

[8] See E/CN.4/1995/2–E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/56, chap. II, sect. A.

Recalling also that one of the objectives of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People is to consider the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system,

Taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/20 of 9 April 1998,[9] as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1998/247 of 30 July 1998, in which the Commission decided to establish an open-ended inter-sessional ad hoc working group, from within existing overall United Nations resources, to meet for five working days prior to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission to elaborate and consider further proposals for the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system,

Taking note also of the provisions in Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/20 regarding the participation of organizations of indigenous people in the ad hoc working group,

Recognizing the desirability of assisting organizations of indigenous people in participating in the ad hoc working group,

1. *Decides* that the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations should also be used to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the open-ended inter-sessional ad hoc working group of the Commission on Human Rights established by the Commission in its resolution 1998/20, as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1998/247 of 30 July 1998;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of Member States and to invite them to consider contributing to the Fund.

11. The Third Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Secretary-General on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

The General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations.

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[9] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.